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(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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WHY THE WORLD LOOKS TOWARDS INDIA? *

India is a big country; perhaps she is the only country in the world which has been in existence from such a long time. Her history is ten thousand years old. Several kinds of people have settled here, and this is the only country in the world which is inhabited by such a variety of communities. This country became so big because our ancestors were broad-minded and generous and they treated others well. The world recognizes India as a peace-loving country. Our *kisans* are experienced men and the world is surprised to find them using very small implements. They are not trained but they are industrious. They rarely quarrel among themselves, but there are people who create quarrels and these are often educated people and not the common people. Even today the common people in the newly-created Unions like Rajasthan, Madhya Bharat, etc. work in peace and only people in cities quarrel among themselves. People who are after power create such quarrels. Therefore, my advice to the villagers always is to keep themselves away from this atmosphere of strife. These Meos, who were immersed in their own work, were swayed by the city people; their homes were made desolate, the atmosphere became poisoned and bad acts were committed on both sides. By God's grace, that poison has gone and we have come to our senses. I am happy to learn that the Meos will return to their homes. If the authorities and others look at this question with love, they will understand what a big task is being achieved.

Our Constituent Assembly has decided that in the future constitution of India there will be no distinctions between a Hindu, a Muslim or a Christian. Reserved seats and communal electorates have been abolished. One outstanding feature is the fact that the Muslims also gave their support to this. That is, the decision was arrived at unanimously. Now the problem before the country is to fill it with love and friendship. We are a strong nation and if we live in peace, we can bring Heaven into India and the whole world will learn a lesson from us. The world is tired of violence. Within the last twentyfive years or so, there have been two world wars, resulting in vast destruction. The world wants to escape a third war and looks to India for guidance.

One of the reasons for the world's hope of India is her history. India has never been an aggressor, in her whole history. Many empires have come and gone — we had the empires of Harsha, Ashoka and Samudragupta. It has been said of Samudragupta that he considered this vast country from Kashmir to Cape Comorin as his, but did not cast his eyes on the countries outside, though he was strong enough to attack them. The other emperors also behaved similarly and that is the characteristic of India. People went outside India to spread Buddhism, armed with knowledge and ideas and not with political power. They propagated Buddhism by explaining it to the people. The result is that today there are 40 crores of Buddhists in the world, which has no parallel in the history of the world. Christians also spread their religion here but they had their government. There was no political power to back the Buddhist propagandists. That shows India's spirit of tolerance. The same spirit permeated Gandhiji's life and that is the reason why the world reads his life with great interest. From time immemorial, our history is full of such examples and the numerous saints and great men, who were born in this country, exercised great moral influence on the kings. Because of such traditional beauties, the world entertains high hopes of India.

There is also another reason for such high hopes. We won our independence by carrying on a peaceful struggle under Gandhiji's leadership for over thirty years. Some credit of this achievement belongs to the British also. They are a clever people and they recognized the opportune moment when they should willingly leave this country so that our friendship may be everlasting. Any other obstinate race would not have quitted unless forced to do so. Then the world situation also contributed to this achievement. But above all were the great qualities of the leadership of Gandhiji. General MacArthur of America has said that science has advanced much and if violence joins hands with science, humanity will be destroyed. Therefore the world thinkers appreciate Gandhiji's path of non-violence and look towards India for lead.

A third reason for India's high prestige in the world is our Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, who, being generous and broad-minded, thinks that the good of the world is the good of India.

For these three reasons India's prestige in the world is high today. If we maintain internal peace, India's moral influence will increase and her voice will be heard throughout the world. If there is no internal peace, all our energies will be spent in maintaining it and we will not be able to serve the poor. We have achieved freedom but what is it worth if its light and warmth are not felt by every one? Nature does not differentiate between man and man. Like a mother, she treats all — rich and poor — alike. Therefore our freedom will be real only when even the smallest child feels that this is his country where there is nothing but justice, and there is equal protection for all.

But after our independence this has not been our experience, because most of our energies were spent in maintaining peace. By God's grace, peace is returning to this country and we should all live in peace and friendship.

VINOBA

* Adapted from Shri Vinoba's post-prayer speech in Hindustani at Kama (Bharatpur) on 6-6-'49

Notice

Lovers of Gandhian literature in South India will be pleased to learn that though some of the bigger booksellers of Madras used to sell books published by the Navajivan Karyalaya we have now arranged for the sale of all our publications at the A. I. S. A. (Tamilnad) Khadi Vastralaya, Rattan Bazaar, MADRAS.

J. D.

CONTROLS RE-EXAMINED

I

[The writer of the following article had discussed last year, the question of Controls through the columns of the *Harijan* under the *nom de plume* of "Disgusted". He re-examines the subject at greater length to show how they have affected our economic condition and comforts since then. I shall reserve my comments until the conclusion of the series. — Ed.]

The common man is still suffering under a number of disabilities, the most important one being the high cost of living. The Government have taken strong anti-inflationary measures so that prices may be brought down. But still the position remains the same as it was. The cost of living index figures do not show any appreciable difference and there is no prospect of the hardships and the miseries of the common man being lessened in the near future. I feel that the basic approach to the whole problem is wrong and is misconceived and with the present methods, even ten years of efforts might fail to alleviate the sufferings of the masses in India. Let me take up each item one by one.

Food

Food shortage in India is not a new problem inasmuch as we were importing a million or two million tons of rice from Burma and that source was cut off during and after the war. To combat this food shortage, we started the 'Grow More Food' campaign, brought increased acreage under cultivation and imported considerable quantities of foodgrains after the war and even then we have not sufficient to feed ourselves; nor are we getting the qualities and quantities required by us. To ensure equitable distribution at cheap prices, rationing was introduced for almost one-third of the population, and stringent laws were imposed for curtailing consumption and free movement of foodgrains. For the rationing system not only foodgrains were imported but compulsory or voluntary procurement was resorted to. In spite of these, the rates at which the public obtained their foodgrains were nearly 300 to 400 per cent higher and persons never got what they were accustomed to or the right quality of foodgrains, but deteriorated or poor substitutes. The main defects of meeting shortages in this way immediately came to the forefront. Procurement prices were very low in the beginning and even when raised, the margin between cultivators' selling price and the procurement price was very large and one fails to account for this large difference. I am informed that rice is procured in a certain district at Rs. 12-8-0 or Rs. 12-12-0 per maund ex-mill, but the same rice is sold at about Rs. 17-0-0 or Rs. 18-0-0 per maund to the public in that very district. Prices of paddy were fixed at about Rs. 7-0-0 per maund and on that basis selling price should be Rs. 12-0-0 per Bengal maund. In normal times the difference between paddy and rice prices was never more than 50 per cent. One cannot understand why it should be 125 or 150 per cent now. It is doubtful whether the poor agriculturists ever get the prices fixed, because of their ignorance and the dishonesty of agents and subordinate Government officers. Farmers were however intelligent enough to understand the big gap between the Government's buying and selling prices and their co-operation with procurement schemes was lukewarm. Of late there is even hostility and violence against these schemes. Hence procurement schemes have failed and considerable foodgrains find their way to the black market with the connivance of corrupt Government subordinate officials and police. Also, owing to red-tapism in government machinery, involving delayed payment and slow movement, large quantities of procured grains deteriorate and loss is caused by weevil or in transit.

Besides red-tapism, there are other defects also both in the procurement and the purchase of foreign grains. Government encountered opposition from villagers because in some cases there were actually crop failures, when Government officials insisted on the fixed quotas of procurement. And the purchase of foreign foodgrains was left in the hands of amateur persons who bought at any cost and whatever foodgrains were available, whether suitable or not. Large quantities of maize and even rotten wheat which were unfit for human consumption were purchased. Here too, the difference between the purchase price of the Government and the selling price leaves a wide margin which cannot be understood by the common people. If wheat is available for $1.80 per bushel, that is about 66 lbs. and even if the landed cost is slightly higher on account of freight and other shipping charges, one cannot understand the difference of about 50 to 60 per cent between the actual landed cost and the ultimate cost to the consumer. And in spite of all this, the losses on purchase and sale of foodgrains are large both according to the Central and Provincial budgets. So the consumer pays directly and indirectly by way of taxes much more than even the selling prices of the commodities. I think it is high time somebody probed into this problem and found out where the differences are going and what is the actual cost to the public, after taking the amounts spent directly or indirectly. How can anti-inflationary measures ever succeed so long as food prices remain at the present level and the public exchequer on the top of it incurs large amount of expenditure on establishments and suffers losses?

Defects in the Rationing System

It never gave to the public what they wanted either in quantity or in quality. Rationing on card basis led to fictitious or bogus cards and a number of people made a living out of it. Quotas fixed for hotels and public establishments were deliberately kept low so that they were compelled to resort to black-market operations.

Losses in transit were considerable, both in railways and in movements from one place to another by motor transport and these lost foodgrains were available for sale in black markets. There was another complaint against rationing that people living in a particular area never got foodgrains grown in that area. It appears to me that people who were in charge of the foodgrains organization relied on data which was never up-to-date nor did they have a concrete well-thought out plan for tackling this problem. There has been no proper co-ordination between centre and provinces; while the centre is asked to find foodgrains for all deficit areas, provinces have not done their part of the work, that is, of increasing the area under cultivation of foodgrains nor improved their machinery of procurement and quick movement. In fact restrictions imposed by them on sale and transfer from village to village and district to district impeded movement of stocks and sometimes these were destroyed by weevil or rotted with farmers. The ultimate result is that shortages are manipulated and sought to be perpetuated for the benefit of the vested interests.

Solution of Food Problem

The actual food shortage is only about 5 or 10 per cent, that is, about two or three million tons. This is not much considering the fact that India is an agricultural country growing most of its foodgrains. If we work out per capita the shortage may not even work out to half a *chhatak* per head. It is often argued that though the quantity is small this slight margin may lead to higher prices, hoarding by traders and wastage by the richer classes as they can easily afford to buy any quantity, if there was no control or rationing. I admit that the marginal shortage may lead to higher prices, but I do not agree it will encourage hoarding among traders or that richer classes of people will be wasting these commodities by excessive consumption or entertainment. Inspite of rationing and controls nobody can say that the richer classes have been prevented from either getting whatever quantities they wanted or from entertaining any number of guests privately. As regards hoarding by traders I can definitely say that if supplies are coming regularly into the market the traders will not have the necessary money, i.e. nearly 1,000 crores of rupees to manipulate prices, particularly when Government is importing the shortage. In no case is it necessary for us, in order to meet the consequences of this small deficit, to have all these procurement schemes and the resultant opposition and losses, to inflict hardships on the public by not meeting with their requirements and to have nearly one-third of the population under rationing. We can devise a more simple machinery to meet the shortages and avoid top-heavy administrative services, Central and Provincial. I would suggest a more simple solution, that is, restriction of rationing to only five or ten per cent of the population, particularly in the deficit areas or in industrial towns by imported grains. Other stratas of the society should be completely left out. There should be no restriction on movement of foodgrains in any part of India except that the Government should guard against smuggling on the border areas, particularly East Bengal, which is a deficit area. If the Government can purchase wheat or rice in the foreign market, the same should be sold at their landed cost plus transport charges only and it should not be sold through Government agencies but handed over in cities to mills and commercial establishments, who should be asked to take the foodgrains direct from ports to avoid handling and wastage charges. Government can also have their cheap rationing shops for other people, non-industrial and non-commercial. I would further suggest that these imported foodgrains should be sold at ports and as near to ports as possible, and in such places where commercial crops are grown or in places where there is a tendency on the part of traders to profiteering. As already stated, there should be no restriction in movement even in rationed areas, so that those who do not desire to use imported stuff can buy indigenous production. If foreign foodgrain markets were free, I would suggest that the import of foodgrains also should be left to commercial importers rather than Government. But at present owing to shortage of foodgrains on a world-wide scale, manipulated or otherwise, foreign Governments are trying to make capital out of the situation. Even if Government has the necessity to procure, the procurement price and the selling price should not have a difference of more than 10 to 20 per cent including all charges, in other words, the difference between procurement and selling prices should not be more than what was during pre-rationing conditions.

I think under the present scheme there is avoidable transport and handling charges, because Government policy is generally to unload it from a ship and take it to some central storage and again to distribute it to Provincial Centres and they again in their turn distribute it to the retailers. I am not quite sure on this point but the difference in their procurement and selling rates may be due to this, although not wholly. It is also necessary that the Government should publish a correct audited statement showing on the one side landed cost, i.e. the cost of foodgrains as paid to foreigners, plus freight and insurance charges, handling charges, wastage, loss in transit, etc., and on the other side, the realization and stock. The accounts should be published every three months and not after years and that too for departmental records.

(To be continued)

HARIJAN

September 4 1949

CHARKHA JAYANTI

Charkha Jayanti is drawing near. *Khadi* workers and regular spinners are already busy about it. For several years past, Shri Narandas Gandhi has been promoting the practice of observing a spinning term lasting for as many number of days and of accepting donations in terms of as many hanks or coins as the number of Gandhiji's birthday. Thus for him every year the Jayanti term increases by a day. Following this practice, Shri G. Sitaramsastry of Vinayashram in Andhra has organized a number of non-stop *charkhas* for eightyone days and has already produced by now a large stock of yarn. If future generations continue this practice faithfully, on the 365th anniversary of Gandhiji's birthday, the observance of the 365th Jayanti will synchronize with the end of the 364th. In other words it will cease to be a Jayanti, spinning having thereafter become a daily duty of the observer. That, of course, is the very object underlying the spinning wheel. It is not a ceremonial practice to be performed for a stated number of days, but a thing meant to form part of one's daily life. Once this habit is inculcated in the people, there is no necessity to count the date of its commencement or for running spinning wheels ceaselessly.

Plying the spinning wheel is so easy, pleasant and refreshing work that one who knows it well does not like to leave it soon, once it is started, and spinning in company with others is even more pleasant. But human nature as it is, tries to seek excuses and puts forward pleas to escape from doing even an easy, interesting and refreshing task so long as the habit of doing it has not developed. On the other hand, when once a habit is formed, man will perform even difficult, harmful and tiresome tasks. To shave daily in the morning is no pleasant work; but since the mind has developed the complex that the face should look clean in society, even a person suffering from fever insists upon doing it. But he would not engage himself in such work as *pranayama* or *suryanamaskara* though they are healthy exercises. Thus the formation of a good habit is as difficult as making an impression on a stone by means of a rope. The impression is definitely made, but after exhausting a number of ropes. On this ground, Shri Narandas Gandhi has fixed the long period of 300 years for the full achievement of the ideal, (if we regard Bapu's 65th Birthday as the beginning of this practice). In spreading over this great sacrifice to five or six generations, Shri Narandasbhai has shown inexhaustible patience, perfect confidence in the objective, and faith in God and life.

Shri Sitaramsastry and other workers of his temperament by utilizing this opportunity for expressing their earnest faith have been giving it a great momentum.

There is no doubt that prominent leaders can contribute much to this movement for inculcating and popularizing new habits in the people. But Gandhiji's ideology of the spinning wheel is so completely original and revolutionary that it is no wonder if people find it difficult or novel or scholars, grooved in different channels of thinking, look upon it as strange or even of doubtful soundness. It is, therefore, not unnatural if many of our leaders show indifference towards it. Fortunately, however, there are among the leaders some who understand it and take part in it. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's message shows his faith and regard for it. If he cannot spin now, no one will find fault with him at his age and in the present state of his health. Shri Manibehn Patel makes up for him. She does not sleep before finishing her daily spinning. Mostly it is Manibehn's yarn which clothes Sardar. Shri Rajendrababu, if not ill or too busy in urgent work, loves the *charkha* intensely and often spins for two or more hours at a stretch and with good speed. Dr. Kailasnath Katju, the Governor of West Bengal, conducts the spinning activity even in the Government House and tours the villages for popularizing it. He has as much reverence for the spinning wheel as he has for Sanskrit. The Premier of Rajasthan, Shri Hiralal Sastry, has recently informed us that he wears the clothes woven from self-spun yarn only. That he spins for his clothes, besides discharging his duties as a Premier, is really creditable to him. In the Bombay Cabinet also, Shri Morarji Desai is, I believe, generally a regular spinner. I mention names only well-known to me. There are perhaps one or more charkha-loving ministers in almost every province. Nevertheless, it is true that the ideology or love for spinning is not quite common among prominent men in government.

By efforts of such earnest *khadi*-lovers, examples set by leaders and help of *khadi-sevaks*, the Charkha Sangh has been making efforts to pursue its original object of making spinning a part of daily work of the people throughout the country and a means of self-sufficiency in cloth. This is its only true and main work. It certainly wants to clothe the entire country with *khadi*, but it has realized that it could not be done by creating an organization for producing and selling *khadi* anyhow to *khadi*-lovers. It is understandable if four or five per cent of the people, though capable of spinning, depend upon others. But if the majority suffers from such a mentality, it is impossible to make *khadi* universal; i.e. it cannot be afforded or else it could thrive only under some form of administration which is either tyrannical or exploitary. It cannot achieve universal good — *Sarvodaya*.

Realizing this fact, the Charkha Sangh has applied its organizing capacity in propagating spinning for self. Even great leaders have not been able to understand this change and have misunderstood the policy of the Charkha Sangh.

Some feel that this is a confession of defeat of the organizing capacity of the Charkha Sangh; some feel that it is forcible imposition of spinning work upon *khadi*-lovers; some sense in it an attempt to show that the spinners belong to a higher caste than mere *khadi*-weares. Some accuse it of intolerance or an attempt to found a sect, and in like manner various doubts are raised or motives attributed.

But if one reasons properly, it will be clear that if *khadi* is to be made universal, it could be done only on the lines indicated by the Charkha Sangh. If an attempt is made on any other lines, it can become only a sentimental expression of the few or the badge of a political or semi-religious group. It would always require the patronage of either the State or the wealthy class for its maintenance and propagation. People associate many good virtues with *khadi*-wearing. If a person puts on mill clothes whether he puts on a necktie and a hat or whether he puts on a turban and a long robe, no one feels that he is a rogue or a gentleman in spite of a particular kind of dress; for all believe that the personal character of a man bears no relationship with mill cloth or its fashion of tailoring. But people look to *khadi* as a religious or political symbol and so, as they criticize a *vaishnav* carrying the sectarian mark on his forehead, they criticize the *khadi*-wearer's character also by the quality of his cloth.

The propaganda of *charkha* and *khadi* is not intended to create a sect of followers of Gandhiji or the Congress. *Khadi* is not meant for providing a test for man's moral character. It has been conceived as the fundamental remedy for the abolition of poverty of the forty crores of people of India (including Pakistan). That object still remains. Neither by industrialization of various types nor by Communist or other form of Government can *Sarvodaya* be brought. There is none but this way to *Sarvodaya* which guarantees individual freedom, development of the personality and abolition of poverty all at once. That being his conviction, Gandhiji spent a great part of his energies after the *charkha*. As a result of his efforts, a handful of workers, though imperfect, were produced, who have made it their life-mission. People will advance in the direction of *Sarvodaya* to the extent they adopt the *charkha* and be its propagandists.

Either through reasoned conviction or under the force of circumstances, people and governments have to realize one day that the acceptance of the *charkha* is the only sure memorial of Gandhiji and the celebration of Gandhi Jayanti.

Wardha, 23-8-'49 K. G. MASHRUWALA

(*Translated from Gujarati*)

A Correction

Harijan, 21-8-'49, Page 200; *Read* "....give. The Nai Talim people," he continued, "would ...." *for* "....give the Nai Talim people." He continued, "it would...." in para 2 of the appeal.

OUR INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY

[Acharya Kripalani's message for the 81st Charkha Jayanti.]

It is usual to intensify constructive work on the occasion of Bapu's Birthday. He gave central place to *charkha* and *khadi* in all those activities. It was hoped that as soon as foreign rule was removed and our own people had assumed power, the National Government would make *khadi* its own concern. But perhaps, involved as it is in political complications, we do not receive from it the expected lead to *khadi*. The responsibility of the public, therefore, to take to *khadi* is all the greater.

We observe that the more we are receding from Bapu's teachings and principles the greater is the loss suffered by our country. It should not happen that whatever good things we imbibed from Bapu should die with him. In fact in his absence our duty is greater than ever. If India is to be absolved from the sin of his death, the only one way to it is to pledge to carry on the constructive work which was so much after his heart and with the help of which he carried on the struggle for *Swaraj*.

New Delhi, 26-7-'49

(*Translated from Hindustani*)

"PHYSICAL LABOUR WEEK"

Shri K. G. Saiyidain, at present Educational Adviser to Bombay Government, has published a pamphlet, *An Experiment in Social Education*, containing details of a programme of 'Physical Labour Week' organized by him in the schools of Kashmir State, where he was the Director of Education before joining the Bombay Government. Extracts from the report are given below:

It is necessary that the programme drawn up should fulfil the following conditions:

1. It should provide for *real* labour and manual work, suited to the ages of the children, so that they may actually achieve something worthwhile at the end of the week.
2. The programme planned should lend itself to co-operative activity so that children may work in groups and thus learn through practice the habits of discipline and qualities of leadership.
3. It should be varied and carefully planned so that the tens of thousands of children participating in it may all find something worthwhile to do and waste of time — merely "playing" at work — is avoided. This will be facilitated if the programme includes work inside the school as well as outside — community sanitation, help in field operations, hospital visiting, constructional activities, etc.
4. In order to exploit the *educational* possibilities of this Labour Week project attempts should be made — as indicated in the Report — to link up the work done with school programmes of learning and thereby vitalizing reading, writing, arithmetic and all other subjects.

The following outline programme was drawn up to guide the teachers all over the province in the work to be attempted during the Labour Week:

(1) White-washing of the classrooms;

(2) Mud plastering of the school roofs wherever necessary;

(3) Cleaning and improving of the school rooms, verandahs, compounds, gardens and playgrounds;

(4) Improving the school walls and fencing;

(5) Cleaning of the furniture in the laboratory, the library and the school rooms, and varnishing it, if funds permit;

(6) School decoration — preparation of charts and pictures, stencilling suitable mottoes, etc.;

(7) Improving the school approaches, e.g. filling up of depressions, removing obstacles, improving the condition of roads;

(8) Improvement of roads — filling up of depressions and cesspools, clearing of drainage, etc., in the school locality; and

(9) Improving the school lawn by turfing.

From the reports received, it was found that the following kind of work was done by the students in Primary, Middle and High Schools all over the State:

(1) Cleaning, white-washing, repairing and decorating the school buildings, furniture, lawns, grounds and surroundings.

(2) Removing of stones, glass, iron nails, etc., from the lanes and streets.

(3) Cleaning watering places like springs, and ponds and helping in digging wells.

(4) Constructing bridges over small drains and streams to facilitate communication.

(5) Filling pits in the streets and lanes, clearing and repairing roads, repairing broken slopes of hills which were dangerous for the ignorant passers-by.

(6) Establishing bathing centres for slum children.

(7) Teaching adults to write their names.

(8) Improving drainage and drying marshy grounds.

(9) Turfing of the school compound.

(10) Propaganda amongst the public regarding the importance of personal cleanliness and social sanitation in order to ward off common diseases; storing of manure pits; learning the use of the modern agricultural methods and implements in adult education and education of children. This was done through the example of actual work as well as through organized processions in the course of which teachers and the students delivered speeches, sang songs and arranged other programmes.

With a view to giving a concrete idea of the scope of work accomplished and to show that concerted effort and activity can achieve great results, a few of the projects actually carried out by some of the schools are cited below:

(1) Putting up a solid stone wall 150 feet x 2½ feet x 3 feet around the school garden.

(2) Construction of bridges over *nullahs* which had made it difficult for children to attend school.

(3) Construction of latrines for the school.

(4) Cleaning up a large plot of land adjacent to the school and cutting down tall bushes where snakes used to take shelter.

(5) Setting up of bathing centres where babies were given daily baths.

(6) Planning and construction of model kitchens.

(7) Construction of a 'fair-weather thatched "reading room".

(8) Social service work in the Mission Hospital.

(9) Constructing a wall round a mosque.

(10) Cleaning of sulphur springs which had been dirty for decades and a source of disease and infection.

(11) Construction of a channel to bring water to the school garden.

(12) Construction of a hut against the background of a magnificent *chinar* tree to store sports material.

The Editor of the *Nutan Sikshan*, (a Gujarati monthly published from Surat), while reproducing the above report in the issue of May-June 1949, has appealed to the schools to observe the ensuing Gandhi Jayanti as 'Social Service and Labour Week'. The suggestion is very good, but in undertaking any work in the name of Gandhiji, the following principles should necessarily be observed in the programme:

(1) Spinning.

(2) Harijan service and functions for the establishment of equality of all castes and communities.

(3) The programme should suit the season and the agricultural activities of the villages.

(4) A complete outline showing the distribution of work to be done by various parties should be ready well before time so that there is no confusion at the nick of the moment for want of instructions or implements.

(5) An account of the work done by each, of expenditure incurred and the results obtained ultimately should be assessed at the end.

(6) This programme should not conflict with that of other organizations in the village nor is it desirable that each organization have a different programme.

Wardha, 10-8-'49 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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COST OF IGNORANCE

It is often said that education is costly but when you come to real values, ignorance is more costly. Such ignorance prevails also in high quarters. It is propagated by vested interests at enormous cost by setting up fashions and advertising in their business-controlled papers. They teach us to throw away that which is good and hold fast to the chaff. They take hold of the cast off substance and return it back to the original holder at fabulous prices in different forms and under different names. So the ignorant consumer pays for his ignorance twice over, once when he throws it away and a second time when he buys it back. This costly ignorance is prevalent mostly among the sophisticated townsfolk and it is fostered by the Government backed by the business people. Such ignorance is set up by fashions which do not cater for our real needs but pander to our vanity.

The most common field for such ignorance is in the food line. Wholesome food produced by nature is destroyed by man by false processing. The consumers suffer from malnutrition and business comes to the aid ushered in by medical men coached up by propaganda and advertisements. This system is not merely costly financially but it is definitely ruinous from the health point of view. This type of exploitation can only be counteracted by proper dietetic education in schools. In spite of food shortage the Government allows polishing of rice and the preparation of *maida*. We are thus throwing away vast quantities of nutritious food, causing ill health and damage to life.

It has been found that rice-polishings which are thrown away contain about 1980 calories in one pound of bran. These polishings contain :

1.	Protein	19.0 per cent
2.	Fat	20.0 „
3.	Carbohydrates	42.0 „
4.	Salts	8.3 „
5.	Cellulose and fibres	1.0 „
6.	Moisture	8.3 „

It will be seen, therefore, that in polishing rice we are throwing away valuable nutrition.

If it were left at this point, there will not be further exploitation apart from malnutrition. When the consumer suffers from malnutrition the travelling salesmen in the form of medical men come to his rescue with various types of drugs and injections, charging the patient in addition to causing him distress and pain.

The businessman now steps in by producing vitaminized rice. This vitaminized rice is added to the polished rice so as to restore to the polished rice the original nutritious value! At the moment they are establishing such a factory at Singapore. All these business arrangements are necessary to satisfy an artificially created fashion of serving snow-white rice made tasteless by processing.

We can see, therefore, that this method of raising the standard of living will increase expenditure without meeting the needs of the people. The natural consequence is that the victim spends more and more and gets less and less real satisfaction. This is brought out by an enquiry into the family budget of middle-class employees of the Central Government. Enquiry shows that in U. P., the Punjab, Bihar, Orissa, C. P. and Madras city, deficit budgets form more than 80 per cent on the total number, and about 40 per cent of the families in Delhi and 75 per cent in Calcutta are involved in debt consequently. What is needed, therefore, is the inculcation of true values and not spreading of business-inspired standards of living. It will be the function of a National Government to educate its people in a rational mode of living to save them from profitless exploitation and meaningless expenditure.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

Caution about Subsidiary Foods

Leaders have been advising people to reduce their consumption of cereals with the help of subsidiary foods such as bananas, tapioca, sweet potatoes, etc. Perhaps they are not fully aware of the danger that that very advice is prejudicial to the production of foodgrains. A correspondent from South India drawing attention to this danger writes :

> "Hundreds of acres of rich irrigated land has been changed over to these subsidiary foods. The small self-sufficient peasant produces these subsidiaries and cereals for his own consumption, but the commercial producers are those who grow these on a large scale. They grow for the markets hundreds of miles away, and they manage to get the best lands to increase their profit. Sugar-cane also has taken away a good portion of rich irrigated soil.
>
> "From the introduction of rationing, which has been insufficient (6-8-10-12 ounces), the demand for these subsidiaries has increased and greater area has been taken over by these crops. If propaganda is added and facilities are offered, the diversion from cereal cultivation will be greater.
>
> "These subsidiaries are all uncontrolled and they get the cultivator twice or thrice the money income than the cereals from their land. Only certain tracts of irrigated land cannot be so diverted. Now what happens is this that areas having perennial irrigation grow more of these and sugar-cane than cereals."

Similarly another correspondent from Gujarat :

> "Progressively Bardoli has now reached the mark of Rs. 12 to 15 lakhs worth of bananas, which it exports to other places. The agriculturists are concentrating their attention upon banana cultivation, which is more paying than cereals, and for that purpose even borrow money to build a pakka engine room and purchase an engine and pump from the black market. There is a regulation that at least half of the land should be utilized for growing food. But all conspire to break the law. Cotton is grown on about 70 to 75 per cent of land, and *juwar* in the rest. In the Kheda district, as soon as monsoon sets in, the cultivator makes a show of sowing rice in the fields and gets three-fourths of the land noted as used for growing food. But later the rice-grass is rooted out and tobacco is sown in the whole area. This is because tobacco is more paying than grains."

Let the Food Production Commissioners and Subsidiary Food Propagandists take caution.

Wardha, 10-8-'49 K. G. M.

LETTERS FROM YERAVDA MANDIR

(By M. K. Gandhi)

XXII

[Purushottam Gandhi writing from Rajkot asked Gandhiji three questions: '(1) What is the difference between the so-called atheism of the Jains and the theism of the Gita? (2) If God is not a doer, who dispenses grace? Is prayer anything more than the expression of a person's wishes? (3) What do you mean when you say that Truth is God?' To him Gandhiji replied as follows:]

I do not think there is any contradiction between the Jain and the Vedic doctrine. They are only different ways of looking at the same thing. The God of Vedic Hinduism is doer as well as non-doer. God pervades the universe and is therefore a doer, but He is a non-doer inasmuch as action does not affect Him, and He has not to enjoy the fruit of action. The universe is not the result of any *karma* (action) of God in the sense in which you use that word. Therefore there is no discrepancy in the Gita verses quoted by you. Remember that the Gita is a poem. God neither says nor does anything. He did not say anything to Arjuna. The conversation between the Lord and Arjuna is imaginary. I do not think there was any such conversation between the Krishna and the Arjuna of history. There is nothing improper or untruthful in the setting of the Gita. There was a custom of casting religious books into such a shape, and we cannot find fault with any cultured individual even today who employs such a vehicle for his ideas. The Jains put it logically, unpoetically and drily and said that there is no Creator of the universe. There is nothing wrong in saying so. However, mankind cannot live by logic alone, but needs poetry. Therefore even the Jain rationalists found it necessary to have temples, images and similar aids for the spirit of man, which are ruled out by mere logic.

In answering your first question I have in effect also answered the second. 'Grace' is the diction of poetry. Devotion (*bhakti*) is itself poetry. But poetry is no improper or inferior or unnecessary thing. On the contrary it is badly needed. Science would tell us that water is a chemical compound of hydrogen and oxygen, but in the language of poetry water is the gift of God. Understanding such poetry is an essential element of life, while ignorance of the chemical composition of water does not matter in the least. It is perfectly logical to say that whatever happens is the fruit of action. But 'impenetrable is the secret of action' (Gita IV-17). We mortals are so constituted that we cannot know all the causative factors of even a very ordinary event. We are therefore perfectly right in saying that nothing happens except by the will and the grace of God. Again the body is a prison for the soul, who is like the air enclosed by a jar. The air in the jar is ineffective so long as it thinks itself to be different from the atmosphere. In the same way the soul imprisoned in the body will be unable to draw upon the Reservoir of Power that is God so long as she imagines herself to be a doer. Therefore to say that whatever happens happens by the will of God is to state a matter of fact, and such humility befits a seeker of truth. A lover of truth entertains only righteous wishes which are bound to be fulfilled. Our prayers bear fruit for the world to the extent that our soul is grounded in truth. The universe is not different from us, and we are not different from the universe. We are all members one of another, and influence one another by our actions. Actions here include thoughts, so that not a single thought is without its effect. Therefore we must cultivate the habit of always thinking good thoughts.

I say that truth is God, not because God is without form and so is truth, but because truth is the only comprehensive attribute of God. Other attributes are only partial expressions of the reality that is God. The Gujarati word *Ishvara* (the Lord) is also a descriptive epithet of God, but as it literally means ruler, it sounds quite insipid. Thinking of God as the King of Kings does not satisfy the intellect. Such a line of thought may generate a kind of fear in our minds, so that we a[re] afraid of committing sin and are encouraged in doing meritorious deeds. But merit acquired out of fear almost ceases to be merit. Let us do good for its own sake, and not in order to win a reward. Pondering over the matter like this, I found that 'God is truth' is an incomplete sentence. 'Truth is God' is the fullest expression of our meaning in so far as it can be set forth in human speech. We arrive at the same conclusion if we consider the etymology of the word *Satya* (truth), which is derived from *sat*. *Sat* means eternal. That which exists at all times is truth. It alone is, everything else is not. But while we learnt to recognize God as truth, we must not allow our faith to weaken. On the other hand it should grow stronger. Such at any rate is my experience. By looking upon truth as God we steer clear of quite a number of dangers. We lose all interest in seeing or hearing about miracles. Seeing God is difficult to understand; but seeing truth presents no such difficulty. Seeing truth is indeed a hard task but as we approach nearer and nearer to truth, we catch a glimpse of the God or truth, so that we hope to have a full view in His good time and our faith also burns brighter and brighter.

(Translated from Gujarati by V. G. D.)

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